

NEW BILSON

URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL OF BILLERICAY

ANNUAL REPORT

of the

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

Patrick X. O'Dwyer, M.B., B.Ch., B.A.O., D.P.H.

including The Report of the

SENIOR SANITARY INSPECTOR

A. L. Ledden, M.S.I.A.

for the Year

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OFFICERS OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT.

Medical Officer of Health :

Patrick X. O'Dwyer, M.B., B.Ch., B.A.O., D.P.H.

Sanitary Inspectorate :

Senior Sanitary Inspector :

A. L. Ledden, M.S.I.A.

Second Sanitary Inspector :

S. W. Harvey, M.S.I.A.

Additional Sanitary Inspector :

M. A. Large, M.S.I.A., A.R.SAN.I.

Clerical Staff :

Chief Clerk :

W. J. Page

(Resigned 25th August, 1951).

J. T. Austin

(Commenced 17th September, 1951).

Clerks :

Mrs. R. D. Chesterton.

B. H. Lee (Left 17th January, 1951—

Conscripted into H.M. Forces).

Miss C. J. Taylor (Temporary appointment).

Public Health Department,
96, High Street,
Billericay.

20th October, 1952.

To the Chairman and Members of the
Urban District Council of Billericay.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I beg to submit for your consideration my Annual Report for the year 1951.

The vital statistics for the area show the same general trends as in recent years and may be regarded as satisfactory. The most interesting event of the year was the discovery in a local hospital of a girl suffering from Asiatic smallpox and who had been admitted as a case of chickenpox. The subsequent precautionary measures placed an unexpected burden on the Health Department and on the hospital concerned, and I would like to express my gratitude to the Hospital Management Committee and to their officers for their willing co-operation, despite the considerable inconvenience which is inevitable at such times. Further comment on this and other matters of special interest will be found in the body of the report.

I have been encouraged by the support received from the Chairman and Members of the Health Committee and from my colleagues in all Departments. To them, and in particular to the Senior Sanitary Inspector, Mr. A. L. Ledden, I express my sincere thanks.

I am,

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

PATRICK X. O'DWYER.

SECTION A.

STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA.

Area in acres	....	....	....	....	27,020
Registrar General's estimate of the Home population	....				43,500
Number of inhabited houses at 31st December, 1951,					
according to the Rate Books	....	....	....		13,489
Rateable Value at 31st December, 1951	....	....	....		£230,763
Sum represented by a penny rate at 31st December, 1951					
(estimated)	....	....	....	....	£903

Vital Statistics.

Live Births.				Total.	Male.	Female.
Legitimate	....	....	....	666	348	318
Illegitimate	....	....	....	36	19	17
Total Birth Rate, Legitimate and Illegitimate, per 1,000						
of the estimated population	....	....	....	....	....	17.9

Still Births.

Still Birth Rate per 1,000 live and still births						
				(Male 6, Female 15)		29.0

Deaths.				Total.	Male.	Female.
Total number of deaths	....			614	330	284
Death Rate per 1,000 of the estimated						
population	....	....	....	11.1		
Pregnancy, childbirth and abortion	....			1	—	1

Death Rate of Infants under 1 year of age:—

All infants per 1,000 live births (Male 7, Female 9)	22.8
Legitimate infants per 1,000 legitimate live births	
(Male 7, Female 8)	22.5
Illegitimate infants per 1,000 illegitimate live births	
(Female 1)	27.8

Death Rate of Infants under 4 weeks of age:—

All infants per 1,000 live births (Male 4, Female 6)	14.2
Legitimate infants per 1,000 legitimate live births	15.0
Illegitimate infants per 1,000 illegitimate live births	Nil

Deaths from certain Diseases:—

	Total.	Male.	Female.
Malignant neoplasm	96	59	37
Measles	1	1	—
Whooping Cough	—	—	—
Gastritis, enteritis and diarrhoea	4	2	2

Deaths from Violent Causes.

There were 14 deaths from these causes during the year, and of these 4 were classified as motor vehicle accidents and 2 as suicide.

SECTION B.

GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE AREA.

Laboratory facilities for the examination of specimens from patients and samples of various items such as milk and water continued to be shared between the laboratories at St. Andrew's Hospital, Billericay, and Westcliff Hospital, Southend.

The ambulance service of the Essex County Council maintained the steady development which has taken place since 1948, and the yearly figures for patients carried and the mileage covered show remarkable increases.

The County Council Health Services are, in the main, administered from Rayleigh, and include health visiting, maternity and child welfare, school health service, the provision of home nurses and domestic help, and the prevention of smallpox and diphtheria by protective inoculation. Further information regarding these services may be obtained from local clinics, from the Area Medical Officer, 153 High Street, Rayleigh, in the case of those not attending school, and from the School Medical Officer, "Brooklands," Hockley Road, Rayleigh, in the case of school children.

The number of general practitioners in the District has increased over the past few years to meet the needs of our growing population.

National Assistance Act, 1948.

Section 47. The living conditions of three persons were investigated with a view to deciding on the need for action under this Act. In one case no action was considered necessary and in the other two cases the individuals left the district.

Section 50. Three funerals were arranged during the year by the Council, under this Section of the Act.

SECTION C.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.**Water Supplies.**

In view of the fact that there are still over 2,000 dwellings in the district where the only source of water supply is from underground rain water storage tanks, it is gratifying to record that there were no outbreaks of water-borne illness during 1951.

Development in this semi-rural area has been at such a speed as to outstrip the resources of the Council to provide piped water supplies to all roadways. The lack of this essential amenity in a district so near to London is particularly ironic because it is chiefly due to migration from the East end of London that the area has developed so quickly.

The Southend Waterworks Company, who are the statutory water undertakers for the urban district, wish to extend mains where it is economically possible for them to do so, and when materials are available, but it has been left to the Council to devise a scheme which will bring this service to the greatest number of people.

The Council decided, after lengthy negotiations with the water company, to proceed immediately with the erection of standpipes off the existing mains, but the position at the end of the year regarding the laying of new mains was that delivery of the necessary pipes could not be expected for at least eighteen months to two years.

The service rendered by the Southend Waterworks Company is satisfactory as regards the quality and quantity and it was not found necessary to "ease up" on the pressure during the year; it remains to be seen however what the effect will be as the new town of Basildon develops. The water is reasonably soft but it is not plumbo solvent and the Company take care to ensure that the supply is pure both chemically and bacteriologically. Samples are examined daily at the Langford Works and samples are forwarded periodically to the Public Health Laboratories for analysis. Copies of the reports are received in the Health Department.

No complaints regarding the quality of the water were received during the year.

The mains were extended during the year by 6,770 yards and 364 connections to dwelling houses were made. The latter figure includes connections to new dwellings. Most extensions to mains were carried out by agreement between the Company and private individuals who could wait no longer for the commencement of the comprehensive schemes. At the end of the year 11,251 dwelling houses were receiving a mains supply.

As the result of a petition by residents of an estate in Wickford a local inquiry was held by the Ministry, who subsequently instructed the Council to provide a piped supply to the estate. Although the majority of the petitioners will avail themselves of the supply when the mains are laid, a few will be unable to do so because of the cost, even though the Council are prepared to carry out the work on the extended payments system.

Samples of the water taken during the year by the Health Department were reported upon as follows:—

			Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Total
Spring wells	....	....	1	1	2
Rain water wells	....	....	1	1	2

Inspections of the wells were made where the samples were unsatisfactory. In addition there were several cases in which the water was so obviously polluted as to render sampling unnecessary. Action was taken in every case to secure a better supply.

The heavy rains of February caused many rain water wells to overflow and, chiefly through the defective condition of the wells, the water became polluted. When such cases were brought to the notice of the Council the wells were pumped out and refilled with a fresh supply.

Water Shortage.

It was indeed fortunate for persons who depend on water collected from roofs that 1951 was a very wet year and this enabled the Council to reduce their expenditure on water delivered by vehicle. 159 properties were supplied with water totalling 73,000 gallons.

Standpipe Water Supplies.

At the year's end there were 42 standpipes in the area, 491 keys were in use and it was estimated that 1,964 persons were dependent upon standpipes for water supplies.

Nuisances.

It is pleasing to note that the number of complaints of nuisances received was considerably less than during the previous year and quite a few were of a minor character which did not require any more than a warning or a request for co-operation with the Council's officials. During the period under review 371 visits were paid and 120 reinspections made to ensure that the requests for abatement were complied with. As is usual, the sink waste nuisance and overflowing or leaking cesspool were predominant. It is difficult for householders to dispose of sewage from cesspools and the contents of pail closets on land where there is insufficient garden attached to the premises, and the efforts made by the

majority of householders to eliminate nuisances is to be praised. One pleasing feature is the gradual disappearance of the unofficial roadside dumps and the greater use of the Council's communal refuse bins, although at times these bins are used for the disposal of refuse other than the normal household refuse.

The development of a district sometimes brings in its wake, at least for the time being, nuisances in watercourses and ditches, particularly where premises have been connected to a main water supply and sewers are not available, and it is not unnatural for water to be used more freely without too much thought for the disposal of the waste. In an area such as this where estates were developed on what was originally farm land, one finds that some owners of properties have "enlarged" their gardens by filling in watercourses and this has in some instances caused flooding. However, a visit and a word of advice usually results in the householders agreeing to re-open the ditches and watercourses so as to assist in the natural drainage of the land. Although the year could not be described as dry the visits paid were much fewer than in the previous year, being 60 as compared with 167 in 1950.

Drainage and Sewerage.

In my last report I mentioned that the Council had formulated a scheme for the provision of sewers over a period of 10 years. The year 1951 saw the commencement of work to be carried out during the first year of the scheme, the scene of operations being Highlands Estate, Bowers Gifford. This Estate has been a source of trouble for many years due to the inadequacy of the gardens for the satisfactory disposal of sewage removed from cesspools. Many of the houses on this Estate are owned and occupied by retired persons whose incomes are limited, but they have welcomed the Council's offer to carry out the work of sewer connections and spread the cost over a period of years. The sewer was also extended to Highfield Road, Billericay. Again, finances were the stumbling block for quick connections, also the layout was such that it was necessary for buildings to be drained in combination: this caused a little difficulty at first, but the patience and persuasive powers of the Surveyor's staff have reaped their reward and at the end of the year the arrangements made were bearing fruit. During the year 375 houses were connected to the sewer; this figure includes 170 new Council houses and 66 houses built by the Basildon Development Corporation and 67 houses built privately. The remainder were existing houses.

The sewage disposal works at Barleylands takes the sewage from the Laindon area and the southern portion of Billericay, and the works have for some time been heavily overloaded and giving unsatisfactory results, so it was necessary for extensions to be carried out. The extensions, consisting of humus tanks and sludge drying beds, were commenced at the latter end of the year.

The construction of an additional rising main from the Northern Pumping Station at Nevendon to deal with the flow from the newly-constructed premises on the Fryerns Estate, Basildon, was commenced. This Estate is being developed by the Basildon Development Corporation and the sewerage scheme is being carried out by the Corporation on behalf of the Council.

Public Cleansing.

Public cleansing is supervised by the Council's Surveyor and a happy liaison exists between the Surveyor's staff and the staff of the Health Department to ensure that the means at our disposal are used to the best advantage. The Surveyor has kindly supplied the following information :—

The substantial increase in the weight of refuse collected necessitated the purchase of a larger vehicle of the self-packing type, enabling the increase to be dealt with satisfactorily. Approximately 7,700 tons of refuse were collected and disposed of by controlled tipping, whilst $158\frac{3}{4}$ tons of salvage were collected and sold for £2,066. It is interesting to note that whilst the weight collected was less than in the previous year the income from sale was considerably higher. The shortage of suitable labour disrupted collection for a period of approximately 3 months, but apart from this no difficulties of major importance were experienced.

There was a slight increase in the collection from trade premises and at the end of the year refuse was being collected from 66 premises.

Mechanical cleansing of district roads proceeded satisfactorily and during the year 1,848 miles of roads were swept by this method.

No complaints were received of nuisances resulting from the Council's refuse tip, but some complaints were received where the Council filled in pond holes on private land and whilst the work was in progress. The adequate covering of the refuse, however, abated the nuisances.

Smoke Abatement.

No complaints were made as to statutory smoke nuisances, and where trouble had been experienced in the past the business was transferred to more suitable premises. There were, of course, complaints regarding neighbours' bonfires in the gardens of private dwellings, but such nuisances cannot be dealt with statutorily.

Swimming Baths and Pools.

There was at the end of the year only one private swimming pool in the area, this one being situated at Vange and supplied by sea water from Vange Creek. The swimming pool at Billericay was closed in 1951.

The Council's paddling pools at Lake Meadows, Billericay and the Langdon Hills Recreation Ground were in great demand by the children during the summer months and they were regularly cleaned out and treated periodically with a chemical preparation: no complaints were received as to their condition. The paddling pools are supervised by the Council's Chief Park Attendant.

Eradication of Bed Bugs and Other Vermin.

It is pleasing to note that the number of causes of infestation by vermin were less than in the year 1950. There were only 6 cases in all, made up as follows:—

			Bugs.	Fleas.
Council properties	....	....	2	—
Private premises	....	....	4	—

In each case disinfection was carried out by the Council's employees. By request, private dwellings are treated at a nominal charge of 5/-. The use of D.D.T. in spray and powder form was continued. During the year 7 visits were paid by the Sanitary Inspectors to verminous premises.

A few cases of infestation of woodwork by woodbeetle were reported and applicants were supplied at cost price with a solution of paradichlorobenzene in turpentine. The use of this solution has proved very effective if treatment is carried out in accordance with the instructions issued.

Rats and Mice.

The number of properties inspected as a result of notification or otherwise for the presence of rats and mice was 100 and it was found necessary to carry out treatment in 66 cases; this figure is made up as follows:—

Local Authority's Property.	Other Dwelling Houses.	Business or Industrial.
7	47	12

The total number of visits made by operatives for treatment was 812, this being a considerable increase over the previous year.

A charge is made for treatment at business premises, the charge being based on the operative's time, the cost of materials and a small percentage for establishment charge. Treatment of dwellings is free. As rats and mice are nomadic creatures the free service could with advantage be extended to include business and industrial premises where the heaviest infestations are usually found. During the year the Council's sewers, sewage works and refuse tips were treated. The two rodent operatives attended a refresher course held by the Infestation Division of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and in all cases the treatment carried out was in accordance with the instructions issued by the Ministry.

The depredations of rats and mice are nation wide and not confined to within the boundaries of Local Authorities, and it would seem common sense for the Central Authority to bear the whole of the expense for the destruction of rats and mice. This, I think, would give more encouragement to Local Authorities in their efforts to rid the country of the pests.

Shops Acts.

During the period under review, 13 visits were made to shops to ensure that the requirements of the Act were being complied with.

Shops were also visited to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Food and Drugs Act and the number quoted above does not include such visits.

Factories and Workshops

The visits to factories and workshops were considerably in excess of those of the previous year, 110 visits being recorded. Infringement of the Factories Acts were found as under :—

Inadequate ventilation	....	....	....	1
Insufficient screening of sanitary conveniences				1
Insufficient conveniences	....	....	....	11
Defective or dirty closets	....	....	....	4
Lack of cleanliness (in a bakehouse)	....			1

Improvements to conveniences were carried out in several cases.

Most of the defects found, as above, were in connection with sanitary accommodation for the use of employees of building firms engaged on construction works in the new town of Basildon. At the end of the year there was an improvement in the numbers and types of conveniences provided for the use of the workmen. It is not an easy job to provide sanitary conveniences for men engaged on such work, as the speed of operations often limits the time for which suitable accommodation can remain at particular sites, and it is difficult to provide water closets and flush-down urinals in the absence of readily available sewers for this type of accommodation. Considerable pressure was put on the employers to ensure that suitable facilities would be provided.

Three applications for Certificates as to adequate means of escape from fire were received during the year. One was not granted because the means of escape provided were not such as to satisfy the local officers of the Essex County Council Fire Service. As the factory was still in the process of reorganisation the matter was left in abeyance until the reorganisation was completed. The remaining two applications were granted.

The industrial site within the Basildon new town area developed considerably towards the end of the year and the plans submitted to the Council for new factories point to rapid development in the coming year. The first factory operating on the site was opened

by a Dairy Company for processing milk, and the most up-to-date equipment has been installed.

The types of articles manufactured throughout the whole area of the urban district ranges from buttons to television parts.

Hairdressers' Premises.

As duties permit, visits are paid to hairdressers' establishments to ensure that they comply with the requirements of the bye-laws. During 1951, 22 visits were paid and these were chiefly where the occupancy had changed and it was desired to advise the new occupiers as to the existence of local bye-laws. The premises were generally found to be in a reasonably clean condition and the methods employed satisfactory.

Massage and Special Treatment Premises.

Licences issued by the Essex County Council are renewed annually upon application, and at the request of the Essex County Council visits are paid by the sanitary inspectorate to ensure that the treatment rooms are satisfactory. Inspection during the year did not reveal any objectionable practices at the premises concerned.

Inspection of the Area.

Visits carried out by Sanitary Inspectors:—

Dwelling houses with respect to—

Defects under Public Health and Housing Acts	....	1,260
Water Supply	....	121
Rehousing (Living conditions of applicants)	....	809
Housing Management	....	50
Civil building Licence applications	....	94
Dustbins	....	33
Sewer connections	....	62
Infectious Disease	....	361
Social Welfare	....	4

Premises with respect to—

Vermin	....	7
Rats and Mice	....	72
Nuisances under Public Health Act	....	491
Manufacture and storage of ice cream	....	45
Distribution and sale of milk	....	115
Massage and Special Treatment Premises	....	1
Hairdressing	....	22
Factories and Workshops	....	110
Slaughterhouses, meat and other food shops and stalls	....	660
Shops under the Shops Act	13
Moveable Dwellings	24
Watercourses	60

Total	<u>4,414</u>
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SECTION D.

HOUSING.

Repairs to Unfit Houses.

The repair of unfit houses is dealt with chiefly under Section 93 of the Public Health Act, 1936 (Nuisance Section) except where major repairs are required and where it is considered that repairs cannot be carried out at a reasonable cost.

During 1951 repairs were found to be necessary in 278 cases : this required 982 re-inspections to the premises before the repairs were finally completed. Many defects have been found when visiting premises for the compilation of reports on applications for Council houses. The time lag between the first request and the final completion of repairs still persists. This is chiefly due to the shortage of local labour and the reluctance of many well-established building firms to take on small jobs. The cost of materials and labour has risen considerably since my last report and the reluctance of owners to carry out repairs is becoming more marked in the face of these constantly rising charges. The payment by owners of Schedule A tax, rates, water rates, insurance, etc., often leaves very little from a property and as often as not house property is a liability instead of an asset. Where major repairs are required owners often prefer to cut their losses and agree to Demolition Orders rather than pay large sums for repairs which may very well exceed the value of the house when the repairs have been completed. The Council are reluctant to issue Demolition Orders where the property is of a type which should be repaired, as it is appreciated that it is the Council's moral responsibility to rehouse displaced families. Perhaps it is a good thing to replace old and sub-standard houses by houses of modern construction, but with 2,000 persons on the Council's housing list any priority given to a displaced person means a further waiting period for families whose names have been on the list for a considerable time.

Action taken under Section 10 and 11 of the Housing Act, 1936, during 1951 was as follows :—

Demolition Orders made	....	....	....	4
Premises demolished	....	....	....	7
Premises closed as a result of Undertakings	....			7
Undertakings accepted	....	....	....	8
Premises made fit	....	....	....	4

Repairs were carried out to 108 premises where informal notices were served.

New dwellings were completed as under :—

By Council (including 3 war-destroyed houses)	173
Basildon Development Corporation	66
London Co-operative Housing Association	27
Private	57
	<hr/> 323 <hr/>

This is an increase in the number of new dwellings over the previous year and it is anticipated that building will be speeded up now that the Basildon Development Corporation's programme is showing results.

Rehousing.

As in the previous year, visits were paid to premises occupied by applicants for Council houses for the purpose of reporting to the appropriate Committee on the living conditions.

These visits entail a lot of work and the walking of many miles over unmade roads, but the reports submitted are appreciated by the Housing Management Sub-Committee and they give much valuable information concerning the sanitary circumstances of the area. As previously stated, these visits often bring to light the bad condition of some of the properties, sometimes resulting in demolition proceedings. Not only are visits paid in connection with applications for our own Council houses but also for reports on living conditions of applicants for other Authorities' houses, particularly the London County Council.

During the year a total of 809 visits were made. In addition visits were paid to Council houses where the appropriate Committee required reports concerning overcrowding, sub-letting, cleanliness, etc. These visits totalled 50 during the year.

At the end of the year there was a slight relaxation of restrictions governing building licences and this resulted in extra visits being paid to the residences of the persons making application. The total of such visits was 94. All applications for building licences are now passed to the Health Department for the compilation of reports on living conditions and many are received from persons residing outside the area who are anxious to build in the area. The local authorities concerned are requested to supply the information needed and I think the thanks of this Council are due to those authorities for their help in this matter. The visits in connection with rehousing and building licences are extremely valuable not only in connection with this immediate purpose but also from the point of public relations.

Moveable Dwellings.

Several applications were received from persons for permission to place caravans on land in the Urban District but most of the applications were refused.

In one case proceedings were taken against a person for placing a van on land without the Council's permission. A conviction was obtained and the van was moved away.

SECTION E.

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

Milk and Dairies.

The year showed a slight increase in the number of visits paid under the Milk and Dairies Regulations; this was chiefly due to the increase in applications for the sale of designated milks. Visits made during the year totalled 115. Samples of milk were taken for Methylene Blue, Phosphatase and Turbidity tests. Of the total 15 samples taken 2 were found to be unsatisfactory, these being samples of ungraded milks.

At the end of the year the following registrations were recorded :—

Dairies	....	....	....	....	15
Distributors	....	....	....	....	110

The consumption of heat treated milk or milk from tuberculin tested herds is on the increase and there are now only a very few distributors selling raw milk.

As in the previous year, many infringements of the requirements of the Milk and Dairies Regulations, 1949, were noted, most of these relating to the deposit of crates of milk on the highway in such positions as to be exposed to rain, heat, mud, and fouling by dogs and birds. Six instances of such infringements were reported to the Health Committee and in one of these cases Court proceedings were instituted. The case was, however, dismissed but the defendant was warned by the Magistrates against continuing the practice of depositing milk without adequate protection on the highway.

In a few cases distributors were warned against the use of vehicles without having their names and addresses conspicuously displayed.

Two complaints regarding the delivery of milk in dirty bottles were received from consumers. The firms responsible for bottling the milk were contacted and no further complaints were received. Having regard to the huge number of bottles filled by these firms it is not surprising that a few bottles escape the eye of the persons

operating the washing and filling machines and it is very creditable that the complaints received were so very few in number.

During the year a serious complaint was received, from a large firm engaged in pasteurising milk, of a peculiar taste in the milk, this being particularly noticeable in the churns of tuberculin tested milk received at the pasteurising dépôt. Samples of milk were taken from sixty-seven churns and by a process of elimination it was discovered that the contamination was from one source and investigations showed that a Hypochlorite was being used in excessive quantities for cleansing and sterilising the churns. Upon ceasing to use the Hypochlorite solution the contamination ceased but not before several hundred gallons of milk had been wasted. The Ministry of Agriculture were notified of the occurrence.

It is pleasing to record that a new pasteurising dépôt was opened towards the end of the year, and whilst trouble was experienced in the beginning, due partly to difficulties with the electricity supply, at the close of the year the plant was working reasonably satisfactorily and approximately 3,500 gallons of milk were being treated daily. The central position of the dépôt will make it easy for the milk to be delivered from farms within the whole of the Billericay Urban District and it is anticipated that with the expansion of this plant more heat-treated milk will be available to consumers and less undesignated raw milk sold. The sale of sterilised milk is on the increase and many grocers now regard sterilized milk as part of their stock-in-trade.

Licences to use special designations were issued as under :—

Tuberculin Tested, Raw and Pasteurised	33
Pasteurised	37
Sterilised	87
Accredited	8
Total	165

Ice Cream.

The number of premises selling ice cream is increasing and during the year 10 premises not previously selling ice cream were registered. Visits to premises registered in connection with regulations totalled 45. The majority of the premises now registered sell ice cream obtained from reputable manufacturers and in the very few cases where ice cream is manufactured by small traders the commodity is manufactured from a cold mix. The Ice Cream Heat Treatment Regulations which require a hot mix to be pasteurised means costly equipment which the average small trader is unable to afford. Consequently, he is obliged to obtain his supplies from the larger concerns: this is all to the good from the hygienic point of view. Fourteen samples were taken during the year and all

were found to be satisfactory. In every case where an application for registration is received, the premises are inspected to ensure compliance with the statutory requirements.

Food Shops and Stalls.

During the year, visits paid to premises under the Food and Drugs Act, 1938, totalled 660, excluding the number previously mentioned when dealing with ice cream premises.

Quite a few of the visits were to ensure compliance with the Council's Bye-laws for handling and wrapping of food. In eight cases it was noted that no provision had been made for an adequate supply of hot water. Representations were made to the occupants of the premises and instantaneous heaters had been fitted in five premises by the end of the year. Visits are frequently paid to food stalls in the two markets in the district and in a few cases it was noted that the names and addresses of the traders were not displayed on the stalls. Representations to the stallholders resulted in the omissions being remedied.

Early in the year complaints were received concerning the condition of tins of imported corned beef. In one case a quantity of animal hair was found in the meat and in another can a portion of bandage. Further investigations showed that many butchers had to remove foreign matter from the meat before sale and this necessitated a careful examination of the meat before it was sold. The facts were reported to the Ministry of Food.

A complaint was received concerning a pork pie which contained human hair. Representations were made to the manufacturers who expressed their sincere regrets, and it is understood that this incident resulted in the management providing a new and improved type of head gear for the women engaged in the manufacture of their food products.

Occupiers of food shops are coming to appreciate that food hygiene is now demanded by their customers; and in consequence the general standard is improving.

Food condemned during the year was as follows:—

				Cwts.	Qtrs.	Lbs.	Ozs.
Meat	....	....	....	7	—	18	4
Fish	....	....	....	2	1	17	8
Chicken	....	....	....	3	—	13	—
Turkey	....	....	....	—	1	15	—
Bacon	....	....	....	—	—	17	4
Sausages, pork	....	....	....	—	—	5	7
Sausages, beef	....	....	....	—	—	24	—

			Cwts.	Qtrs.	Lbs.	Ozs.	
Cheese	....	....	—	—	22	—	
Butter	....	....	—	1	20	4	
Coconut	....	....	—	—	25	—	
Coconut chips	....	....	—	—	11	8	
Biscuits	....	....	1	2	16	—	
Coffee	....	....	—	—	2	—	
Meat, tinned	....	....	11	2	4	6 $\frac{1}{2}$	and 253 tins
Fish, tinned	....	....	—	—	11	15 $\frac{3}{4}$	and 45 tins
Vegetables, tinned	....	....	—	2	—	12	and 428 tins
Fruit, tinned	....	....	2	3	14	2	and 274 tins
Milk, tinned	....	....					177 tins and 153 $\frac{1}{2}$ pints
Soup, tinned	....	....	—	—	7	12	and 71 tins
Pudding, tinned	....	....					2 tins
Jam, tinned	....	....	—	1	19	8	and 11 tins
Mincemeat	....	....	—	—	2	11 $\frac{1}{2}$	and 1 tin
Marmalade	....	....		—	8	8	
Cereal, tinned	....	....					1 tin
Groats, tinned	....	....	—	—	—	8	
Chutney	....	....	—	—	—	8	
Onions, pickled	....	....	—	—	4	13 $\frac{1}{2}$	
Coffee, tinned	....	....	—	—	—	8	
Fish Paste	....	....	—	—	1	12 $\frac{3}{4}$	and 16 tins
Sauce	....	....					1 bottle
Sponge mixture	....	....					48 packets
Miscellaneous tinned foods	....	....					6 tins

SECTION F.

PREVALENCE AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS DISEASE.

Smallpox.

One case of smallpox was notified in the district during 1951, this being the first confirmed case in the area of the present urban district for a considerable number of years. In view of the unusual interest which smallpox evokes, a full report on the circumstances of the case will not be considered out of place.

The patient, a girl of twelve years, whom we shall call Patricia, was admitted to St. Andrew's Hospital Annexe at Gooseberry Green, Billericay, during the morning of February 12th. She

had travelled from India on the R.M.S. "Strathmore," having embarked at Bombay on January 26th, and arrived at Tilbury on February 12th. Patricia felt "out of sorts" on January 28th (i.e., two days after joining the ship) and, in consequence, remained in her cabin. The ship's surgeon was called in on January 30th and, on examination, found that the girl had a temperature of 103·4 and a pulse rate of 120. No other symptoms were noted. On the following morning, January 31st, the temperature had fallen to 102; and in the evening a vesicular rash was seen to be developing, the earliest spots being noticed on the left scapula, the forehead, and the arms and legs. She was at once admitted to the ship's isolation hospital. The vesicular rash continued to develop the next day, when the case was considered to be one of chickenpox. Further vesicles developed each day until February 4th, when the temperature had dropped to 99° and, on February 5th, the temperature was normal and the patient convalescent. It is understood that two Port Medical Officers on the journey accepted the diagnosis of chickenpox.

On arrival at Tilbury on February 12th, arrangements were made for Patricia to be sent by ambulance, as a case of chickenpox, to St. Andrew's Hospital Annexe at Billericay, because the Denton Isolation Hospital was unable to admit female patients. Dr. W. T. G. Boul, Physician in Infectious Disease to the South-East Essex Group of Hospitals, saw the child during the late afternoon of February 13th, and came to the conclusion that she was suffering from modified smallpox.

I saw the girl for the first time on the evening of the 13th, in consultation with Dr. Boul, when I arranged for a smallpox consultant, Dr. E. James of Rush Green Hospital, Romford, to see the patient with Dr. Boul and myself. Following his examination of the girl, Dr. James agreed that the illness was probably smallpox. It was then approximately 11 p.m., and, as Patricia was isolated in a cubicle and could be kept in isolation, it was decided that she be allowed to remain at Billericay overnight. Early the following morning, specimens were sent by car to the Counties Public Health Laboratory in London. A telephone message was received later in the morning from the Laboratory confirming that the case was probably one of smallpox. Arrangements were then made, through the Essex County Council Ambulance Service, for Patricia to be removed to Long Reach Smallpox Hospital, Dartford, Kent.

All those who had been in contact with the case, or who had been in the hospital during the time Patricia was there, were vaccinated without delay by Dr. Boul and other doctors on the staff of the South-East Essex Hospital Group, or by local practitioners. Admission of new patients was stopped and in-patients due for discharge were kept in hospital.

The cubicle which had been occupied by Patricia was disinfected and aired before being used again and the contents were

similarly dealt with or burnt; and here I would like to say how much easier this work was made by the wholehearted co-operation of the Hospital authorities .

All contacts were kept under surveillance for sixteen days and the incident closed with the recovery of the patient and the failure of any contact to develop the disease.

Food Poisoning

There were three notified cases of food poisoning, all unconnected. In two cases the cause of the illness was not discerned but in the third case there was very strong evidence pointing to fish as the medium, which was responsible for a *Salmonella typhi-murium* infection resulting in gastro-enteritis. It seems probable that the main factor in this case was the use of fish which had been cooked the previous day.

Tuberculosis.

The number of new notifications received averaged approximately one per week as in the preceding year. The number of deaths shows a welcome decrease from 23 in 1950 to 13 in 1951. There is a very definite preponderance of males in the notifications and deaths.

Other Infectious Diseases.

There was one case of poliomyelitis during the year. The patient was a schoolboy aged 14 years, who became ill about five days after returning from an A.T.C. Training Camp. The disease was non-paralytic.

Measles was numerically the most important infectious disease prevalent in the area, 985 cases being notified. This amounts to approximately ten per cent. of the population under 16 years of age and is the highest yearly total since 1941.

INCIDENCE OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE, 1951

Quarter	S. Fever	W. Cough	DISEASE							Food Poison- ing	Meningo- coccal Infection
			Poliomyelitis Para. N. Para.	Measles	Pneu- monia	Dysentery	Erysipelas	Smallpox	Puerperal Pyrexia		
MARCH	23	162	—	272	26	1	—	1	—	—	—
JUNE	17	123	—	612	7	25	1	—	—	—	—
SEPTEMBER	5	39	—	97	1	—	1	—	2	1	—
DECEMBER	11	9	—	4	2	29	—	—	1	2	2
TOTAL	56	333	—	985	36	55	2	1	3	3	2
Cases admitted to Hospital	7	3	—	6	—	—	1	1	—	1	2

CASE RATES FOR CERTAIN NOTIFIABLE DISEASES

(Rate per 1,000 Home population).

Local figures compared with England, Wales and certain towns.

Disease.	England and Wales.	125 C.Bs. and Great Towns including London.	148 Smaller Towns Resident Pop. 25,000-50,000 1931 census.	London Adm. County.	Billerica.
Typhoid Fever	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.00
Paratyphoid Fever	0.02	0.03	0.02	0.01	0.00
Meningococcal Infection	0.03	0.04	0.03	0.03	0.04
Scarlet Fever	1.11	1.20	1.20	1.10	1.28
Whooping Cough	3.87	3.62	4.00	3.11	7.65
Diphtheria	0.02	0.02	0.03	0.01	0.00
Erysipelas	0.14	0.15	0.12	0.15	0.04
Smallpox	0.00	0.00	0.00	—	0.02
Measles	14.07	13.93	14.82	14.64	22.64
Pneumonia	0.99	1.04	0.96	0.72	0.82
Acute Poliomyelitis (including Polio-encephalitis)					
Paralytic	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.02	0.00
Non-paralytic	0.02	0.02	0.03	0.02	0.02
Food Poisoning	0.13	0.15	0.08	0.23	0.06

CAUSES OF DEATH DURING 1951

Causes.	Male.	Female.	Total.
All causes	330	284	614
1. Tuberculosis of respiratory system	7	4	11
2. Other forms of Tuberculosis	1	1	2
3. Syphilitic disease	2	2	4
4. Diphtheria	—	—	—
5. Whooping Cough	—	—	—
6. Meningococcal infections	—	—	—
7. Acute Poliomyelitis	—	—	—
8. Measles	1	—	1
9. Other infective and parasitic diseases	—	—	—
10. Malignant neoplasm of stomach	10	5	15
11. Malignant neoplasm of lung and bronchus	14	4	18
12. Malignant neoplasm of breast	—	7	7
13. Malignant neoplasm of uterus	—	4	4
14. Other malignant and lymphatic neoplasms	35	17	52
15. Leukaemia and aleukaemia	1	—	1

Causes.				Male.	Female.	Total.
16.	Diabetes	....	....	1	3	4
17.	Vascular lesions of nervous system	....	....	33	41	74
18.	Coronary disease, angina	....	....	35	24	59
19.	Hypertension with heart disease	....	....	12	10	22
20.	Other heart diseases	....	....	58	62	120
21.	Other circulatory diseases	....	....	12	20	32
22.	Influenza	....	....	6	2	8
23.	Pneumonia	....	....	22	18	40
24.	Bronchitis	....	....	24	15	39
25.	Other diseases of respiratory system	....	....	3	1	4
26.	Ulcer of stomach and duodenum	....	....	1	2	3
27.	Gastritis, enteritis and diarrhoea	....	....	2	2	4
28.	Nephritis and nephrosis	....	....	5	3	8
29.	Hyperplasia of prostate	....	....	4	—	4
30.	Pregnancy, childbirth and abortion	....	....	—	1	1
31.	Congenital malformations	....	....	—	1	1
32.	Other defined and ill-defined diseases	....	....	31	31	62
33.	Motor Vehicle accidents	....	....	4	—	4
34.	All other accidents	....	....	5	3	8
35.	Suicide	....	....	1	1	2
36.	Homicide and operations of war	....	....	—	—	—

DEATHS AT VARIOUS AGES DURING 1951

				Deaths		
Age Group				Male	Female	Total
Under 1	....	....	....	7	9	16
1 - 2	....	....	....	2	—	2
3 - 5	....	....	....	—	1	1
6 - 15	....	....	....	2	—	2
16 - 24	....	....	....	3	1	4
25 - 34	....	....	....	3	4	7
35 - 44	....	....	....	8	5	13
45 - 54	....	....	....	14	15	29
55 - 64	....	....	....	48	29	77
65 - 74	....	....	....	87	86	173
75 and over	....	....	....	156	134	290
Totals				330	284	614

COMPARATIVE TABLE OF BIRTHS AND DEATHS DURING THE YEAR 1951

	Rate per 1,000 home population.		Deaths under one year per 1,000 Live Births.
	Live Births.	Deaths— all causes.	
England and Wales	15.5	12.5	29.6†
126 County Boroughs and Great Towns including London	17.3	13.4	33.9
148 Smaller Towns (Resident population 25,000 - 50,000 at 1931 Census)	16.7	12.5	27.6
London Administrative County	17.8	13.1	26.4
Billericay	17.9	11.1	22.8

† per 1,000 related live births.

TUBERCULOSIS

Notification of New Cases

Age Group	Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary		Total
	M.	F.	M.	F.	
Under 1	—	—	—	—	—
1 - 2	—	—	1	—	1
3 - 4	2	—	—	—	2
5 - 14	4	1	—	1	6
15 - 24	6	6	—	1	13
25 - 34	3	5	—	1	9
35 - 44	1	4	—	—	5
45 - 54	6	1	2	—	9
55 - 64	3	1	—	—	4
65 and over	5	2	—	—	7
Totals	30	20	3	3	56

Of the above totals, 15 pulmonary and 3 non-pulmonary cases were persons who were suffering from tuberculosis before they came to live in the urban district.

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